



RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

RAD Background Report/132
(Poland)
26 July 1984

UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS IN POLAND

by Teresa Hanicka

Summary: Underground publishing in Poland has reached unprecedented dimensions with about 3,000 new publications said to have appeared since the imposition of martial law. These range from primitive, one-page bulletins to sophisticated 500-page books. The issuing agencies include underground Solidarity trade union cells at regional, factory, and interfactory levels and other Solidarity and independent organizations. Topics raised in the union press include discussions of Solidarity communiques, policy, and tactics as well as general news items. There is also a growing number of strictly political publications and a large number of literary, social, and political journals that appear monthly or quarterly. This paper is an attempt at classifying the large variety of underground publications in Poland today.

* * *

Since the imposition of martial law on 13 December 1981, underground publishing, by no means a new phenomenon in Poland, has become one of the country's few growth industries.¹ Within days of martial law's being declared the first bulletins appeared, carrying calls for passive resistance, lists of internees, and appeals for help for their families. Within a few months Solidarity's underground union structure was organized and the Solidarity press became a vehicle for statements by the union's leadership, as well as a source of news. Gradually more ambitious, analytical publications appeared and the underground book market began to flourish again.

The total number of publications to have appeared over this period is estimated by underground sources in Poland at about 3,000. The city of Wroclaw alone, with a population of 631,500, is said to have 56 regular publications. A bibliography compiled by the monthly *Kultura* (published in Paris) lists 846 publications; the RFE archive holds around 400 at present. The underground press appears both in large cities and in smaller towns and the countryside. The number of people involved in its production and distribution can probably be counted in tens of thousands.

The publications range from rough, duplicated bulletins published by clandestine Solidarity factory committees to sophisticated 500-page books. The printing equipment used ranges from offset machines that enterprising Solidarity members managed to hide in the first days of martial law to antiquated duplicators and primitive, but simple to produce and use, silk-screen equipment. Books are often printed in state printing works after hours.

Underground publishing operates as a proper business and printers are, in most cases, paid. Employment is thus provided for many Solidarity members dismissed for their union activity. Smaller publications are usually distributed free of charge, subsidized by union dues and donations. Some publications carry a fee when bought by nonmembers of the issuing agency. Literary journals and books can fetch very high prices on the black market.

Both the production and distribution of uncensored material is illegal, and the penalties involved can be several years in prison. The police have carried out numerous raids, arrested scores of activists, and seized tons of printing equipment and materials. This police activity, however, does not necessarily cause a publication to shut down completely. For example, *Hutnik* [The Steelworker] has been raided several times but continues to appear regularly.

The following is an attempt at classifying the large variety of underground publishing in Poland today.

UNDERGROUND NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Solidarity Publications

1. Regional Level. By the summer of 1982 most of the regions had some form of Solidarity information bulletin. The best organized regional centers of Solidarity are Warsaw, Gdansk, Wroclaw, and Cracow; they delegate representatives to the union's underground Interim Coordinating Commission and also have the largest number of publications. In Warsaw *Tygodnik Mazowsze* [Mazowsze Weekly] appears regularly. It is a typeset on an IBM machine, printed by offset, and has a print run of between 10,000 and 30,000. *Solidarnosc-Gdansk* prints up to 60,000 copies of

each issue. In Wroclaw, *Z Dnia na Dzień* [From Day to Day] has produced over 200 issues since martial law and has a similar circulation.

2. Factory Level. The exact number of factory bulletins is impossible to assess; at any rate, there are hundreds. Some only survive a few issues, others appear very regularly. For example, *Hutnik*, published in the Lenin Steel Works in Nowa Huta, has brought out 80 issues in the last 3 years. The output of large factories is often prolific; for example, the Warsaw Car Factory (FSO) has produced at least four bulletins: *Opornik* [The Register], *Spojnica* [The Bond], *Niezalezny Biuletyn Informacyjny FSO* [Independent Information Bulletin of the Warsaw Car Factory], and *Monter* [The Fitter]. Solidarity committees in small factories and academic and white-collar institutions also often have their own publications. Even as unlikely an institution as the National Bank of Poland brought out its own paper, *Informator Wojenny Banku Polskiego* [The National Polish Bank's War News].

3. District Interfactory Associations. In Warsaw, for example, the weekly *Wola* [The Will], which celebrated its hundredth issue in May this year, is published by the Wola District Interfactory Coordinating Committee. There are also many underground papers that are produced by informal groups of Solidarity supporters. For example *Tygodnik Wojenny* [War Weekly] in Warsaw and *Nasz Czas* [Our Time] produced by "members and supporters of Solidarity in Gdansk."

4. Professional and Trade Publications. These range from heavy industry--for example, *Tymczasem* [Meantime], published by the Provisional Workers' Commission of Steelworkers--to the arts--for example, *Biuletyn Teatralny* [Theatrical Bulletin], published by former members of the disbanded Actors' Union. Health service workers have several underground publications. There are also several separate papers for teachers, all entitled *Solidarnosc Nauczycielska* [Teachers' Solidarity], appearing in Lublin, Cracow, Czestochowa, Katowice, Opole, Warsaw, and Wroclaw. Taxi drivers in Warsaw publish *Solidarnosc Taksowkarzy* [Taxi Drivers' Solidarity]. In May this year the National Solidarity Coordinating Committee for the mining industry was formed and began publishing its own paper, *Gornik Polski* [The Polish Miner]. There is also an underground police publication, entitled *Godnosc* [Dignity].

5. Rural Solidarity. The independent peasants' union has several publications, both national, such as *Zyvia i Bronia* [They Feed and Defend] and *Wies Solidarna* [Rural Solidarity], and regional, such as *Gospodarz* [The Farmer], published by Rural Solidarity in Lower Silesia.

6. "Para-Solidarity" Organizations. There are two major underground organizations that are independent of Solidarity but which share its aims and whose membership often overlaps with

that of the trade union. The Circles of Social Resistance came into existence almost immediately after the imposition of martial law and quickly grew into a nationwide, decentralized network of small groups. The main link between the groups is the fortnightly paper *KOS* [The Polish acronym of the organization], which appears in Warsaw and is reprinted in the regions. Szczecin and Wroclaw and several factories also produce their own version of *KOS*. *KOS* concentrates on grassroots work, and its members are very active in underground education and cultural activities and have assisted in producing *Tu Teraz* [Here, Now], the newspaper of the independent education movement, and *Gazeta Niedzienna* [The Nondaily Newspaper].

Solidarnosc Walczaca [Fighting Solidarity] was formed in June 1982 in Wroclaw. While it supports underground Solidarity, Fighting Solidarity reserves the right to criticize the leadership and to act on its own initiative. Like the Circles of Social Resistance, Fighting Solidarity has cells among all walks of life and in various parts of the country. The publishing activity of the group is considerable. It includes separate editions of the paper *Solidarnosc Walczaca* in Wroclaw, Lodz, Poznan, and Gdansk; the *Biuletyn Dolnoslaski* [Lower Silesian Bulletin], which has appeared since June 1979 and is edited by Kornel Morawiecki, the leader of the organization, who is in hiding; *Wiadomosci Biezace* [Current News]; *Poglady* [Opinions]; and *Replika*.

Social, Political, and Literary Journals

There is a growing number of analytical monthly and quarterly journals. The Solidarity press limits its demands to the reactivation of the trade union, freedom for all political prisoners, and the resumption of talks by the authorities with the union. There is, however, a small but growing number of underground publications that define themselves as strictly political and discuss the formulation of political programs and even the setting up of political parties. Probably the most controversial of these is the monthly *Niepodleglosc* [Independence], which first appeared soon after the introduction of martial law. It describes itself as liberal-democratic and is noted for its rejection of the Yalta Agreement, support for a free market, a federal Poland, and, in the short term, the creation of an association of all underground organizations and initiatives in a "Movement for the Return of Democracy." Other political publications included the "Christian-Liberal" periodical *Trzynastego Grudnia* [13 December], which is produced in Cracow and published its thirty-seventh issue in April 1984; *Polityka Polska* [Polish Politics], which has appeared since the autumn of 1982; the political monthly *Wyzwolenie* [Liberation], which has a social-democratic program and produced its first issue in January 1984; and *Idee* [Ideas], which appeared in February 1984 and is published by Freedom, Justice, and Independence, which is the continuation of the Clubs for a Self-governing Republic founded by Jacek Kuron shortly before the imposition of martial law.

Discussion of political programs has begun to figure more and more in the underground press. Recently the interfactory publication *Wola* (see above) published its political program.

Several journals published before the martial law period have continued to appear: *Glos* [The Voice] has been appearing since October 1977 and *Krytyka* [Criticism] since the summer of 1978.

Many new journals devoted to literature, politics, and social matters have also appeared since the imposition of martial law: *Arka* [The Ark] in Cracow, *Przegląd Myśli Niezależnej* [Review of Independent Thought] in Wrocław, *Obraz* [the Picture] in Szczecin, and *Wezwanie* [The Call] in Warsaw, to mention but a few. A journal worth noting is *Oboz* [The Camp], which discusses the situation in other countries of the Soviet bloc.

Youth Publications

There are several student papers: *Mors* [Morse Code], published by the Intercollegiate Oppositional Youth Movement, and *Akademik*, published by the now illegal Independent Student Association. The underground student press is relatively unimpressive. (Students are often involved in other underground publications not specifically geared to the academic body.) There is, however, a large number of underground publications produced by and for school students. For example, *Gnom* [The Gnome] is published in Warsaw by the Independent Youth Organization; *Topolowka* is published by students at Gdansk Secondary School. In March 1984 the first issue of a new youth paper, *Grzes*, aimed at primary school pupils, appeared in Torun. The name of the paper is a tribute to Grzegorz Przemyk, the high-school student who died from internal injuries in May 1983 after being detained by the police.

Humor and Satire

There are several underground publications devoted entirely to humor and satire. Some are single editions, such as *Komiks Wyborczy* [Election Comic], which was published before the local council elections this year. Others, such as *Jaruzela* (a play on the words "Jaruzelski" and "carousel") appear irregularly.

PAMPHLETS

These include numbered series and special issues.

The *Zeszyty Edukacji Narodowej* [National Education Pamphlets] are published by the underground National Education Council. The independent education movement is flourishing,² and these texts serve both individuals and study circles. The pamphlets cover economics, philosophy, sociology, modern history, and trade union matters.

In Cracow the Interfactory Strike Committee publishes *Zeszyty Zwiaskowe* [Union Pamphlets], which concentrate on union matters.

The Solidarity Center for Documentation and Analysis (an underground Solidairty research center) publishes *Zeszyty CDiA* [Center for Documentation and Analysis Pamphlets] and has also produced a collection of documents regarding the disbanding by the authorities of the Polish Writers' Union and a study of relations between the authorities and the universities from 1981 to 1983.

An example of a special pamphlet is the eight-page booklet published by *Glos* on the role of the army in October 1956, during the workers' protests in Poznan.

BOOKS

Since the imposition of martial law, book production has increased considerably and there seems to be an ever growing demand. Several premartial law publishing houses have continued their activity (some changing their name for security reasons), and many new ones have come into existence. In the first year of martial law, the Krag Publishing House issued 53 new books. The *Kultura* bibliography (see page 1) lists 413 book titles (this only covers books recieved by *Kultura* in Paris). The subjects range from poetry and literature to politics and economics. Probably the greatest demand is for books on postwar Polish history. Since tighter censorship is being introduced and ever more writers are being blacklisted, many authors now publish their work only unofficially.

TAPES AND VIDEO

During the Solidarity period, tape recordings, circulating privately or transmitted by internal factory loudspeaker networks, became one of the means of disseminating information, since the union was denied access to the national mass media. Tape recordings have continued to serve this function. Radio Solidarity has transmitted brief programs in at least 13 cities. Recently the underground publishing house NOWA has begun producing tapes on a large scale. These include songs by internees, a tribute on actors boycotting the state television network, and documentation of Walesa's Nobel Peace Prize. Stefan Bratkowski (the former General Secretary of the now disbanded Polish Journalists' Union) circulates his *Gazeta Dzwiekowa* [Sound Newspaper] on tape. Lectures for clandestine study circles in factories and student groups are often circulated in the form of tape recordings.

Video recordings are as yet accessible to only a small elite in Poland, but will probably in time become cheaper and more

accessible. It is reported that Tom Stoppard's play about Solidarity, *Squaring the Circle*, was watched on video in Warsaw at the same time as it had its premiere on British television.

★ ★ ★

- 1 For a survey of underground publications during the martial law period, see Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka, "Poland's Underground Press," RAD Background Report/168 (Poland), *Radio Free Europe Research*, 18 June 1983.
- 2 See Teresa Hanicka and Nika Krzeczunowicz, "Recent Articles from Underground Publications in Poland," RAD Polish Samizdat Extracts/2C and 2D, *RFER*, 22 June 1984.

- end -